

**BUSH
CHENEY '04**

www.GeorgeWBush.com

March 9, 2004

The Honorable Bradley Smith
Chairman
Federal Election Commission
999 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20463

MUR # 5427

Re: Media Fund
1120 Connecticut Avenue #1100
Washington, DC 20036

and various contributors¹

Dear Chairman Smith:

Media Fund, a Section 527 organization,² and its various donors are blatantly using illegal "soft money" to influence the Presidential election. This knowing and willful circumvention of the new federal election laws by liberal special interests through the purchase of television time to broadcast the advertisement, the pertinent portions of which are addressed *infra*, demands rapid action and severe sanctions by the Federal Election Commission.

As an initial matter, because this advertisement attacks and opposes President George W. Bush, a candidate for federal office, and costs more than \$1,000, Media Fund is required to use "hard" federal dollars to pay for these ads and to register as a federal political committee.

Created as a "shadow Democratic party,"³ the Media Fund violates federal law by using all soft dollars to usurp the role the Democratic Party played in past election cycles. This use of soft-money by a Section 527 organization knowingly and willfully violates the Federal Election Campaign Act and the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act (collectively "the Act") and a ruling the Commission issued last month in AO 2003-37. Media Fund could have aired this advertisement through a federally registered separate segregated fund, but instead chose to use illegal soft dollars raised from liberal special interests in excess of the limits of federal law. Based upon media reports, it appears Media Fund solicited, and donors knowingly gave, soft money contributions for the

¹ Identified *infra*.

² See attached IRS Form 8871 for "Media Fund."

³ See Thomas Edsall, "Liberal Donors Back Anti-Bush Groups" Washington Post, January 31, 2004.

Not Printed at Taxpayers' Expense

Paid for by Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.

Post Office Box 10648
Arlington, VA 22210
Phone: 703-647-2700
Fax: 703-647-2993
RECEIVED
FEDERAL ELECTION
COMMISSION
GENERAL
COUNSEL
2004 MAR 10 P 2:35

RECEIVED
FEC MAIL
OPERATIONS CENTER
2004 MAR 10 A 8:38

27044180122

purpose of defeating President Bush. This subjects Media Fund and its donors to enforcement actions and penalties under BCRA. As detailed below, if Media Fund's donors knowingly and willfully contributed illegal soft money for the purpose of influencing a federal election they are subject to knowing and willful violations.

Media Fund Has Failed to Register as a Political Committee as Required by the Federal Election Campaign Act.

Under the Act, any entity that spends or raises more than \$1,000 in a calendar year,⁴ "for the purpose of influencing any election for federal office"⁵ must register as a federal political committee with the Commission. A committee airing ads cannot select whether or not it is a federal political committee that must register – its actions determine its status under the law.⁶ This filing requirement is not self-selecting. Media Fund's television buy attacking and opposing a clearly identified federal candidate and costing more than \$1,000 requires it to register and abide by the limits and source requirements of the Act.

While Media Fund's ads would not have fallen under the Act in previous elections, they clearly do as a result of the U.S. Supreme Court's December 2003 opinion upholding BCRA. Prior to *McConnell v. FEC*, 540 U.S. ___, 124 S.Ct. 619 (2003), the lower courts had only permitted Federal regulation of communications that involved "express advocacy" as described by the Supreme Court in *Buckley v. Valeo*, 424 U.S. 1 (1976). However, BCRA and the Supreme Court expanded the reach of the Act beyond "express advocacy."

The Commission found last month that the Act required any communication which "promotes, supports, attacks or opposes" a federal candidate to fall under the "hard dollar" rules of the Act. AO 2003-27. The Commission, citing the Supreme Court's decision in *McConnell v. FEC*, 540 U.S. ___, 124 S.Ct. 619 at 675 n. 64 (2003), held that communications referring to a clearly identified federal candidate are for the purpose of influencing a federal election. The Commission confirmed this, stating "communications that promote, support, attack or oppose a clearly identified Federal candidate" have a "dramatic effect" on federal elections. AO 2003-37, at 3.

In AO 2003-37, the Commission told Americans for a Better Country ("ABC"), a Section 527 organization like the Media Fund, that it could not use donations in excess of the Act's limits or from prohibited sources for communications that "promote, support, attack or oppose" a candidate for federal office. AO 2003-37, at 9-10. While Media Fund allies have argued that AO 2003-37 does not apply to Media Fund because it did not register as a federal committee, AO 2003-37 reaffirmed the Act's threshold requirement that any group that raises or spends more than \$1,000 is required to register and become a federal committee.

⁴ 2 U.S.C. § 431(4).

⁵ 2 U.S.C. § 431(9)(A)(i).

⁶ While BCRA did not change the threshold monetary amounts, it did broaden the standards and the Supreme Court in December of 2003 affirmed this expansion. See 2 U.S.C. § 431(20)(A)(iii), 2 U.S.C. § 434(f)(3) and *McConnell v. FEC*, 540 U.S. ___, 124 S.Ct. 619 at 675 n. 64 (2003).

Media Fund was created by former Clinton advisor and Democrat Party operative Harold Ickes and aided by former Kerry campaign manager Jim Jordan.⁷ According to published reports, Media Fund plans to raise as much as \$80 million in "soft money" to "fund an independent advertising campaign for the eventual Democratic presidential nominee."⁸ Further, it is clear that Ickes and Media Fund intend to flout the Supreme Court's decision in *McConnell v. FEC*, 540 U.S. ___, 124 S.Ct. 619 at 675 n. 64 (2003). Media Fund has been clear about its purpose: "The fundraising drive, Ickes said, is meant to replace the soft money funding that helped the Democratic Party run \$75 million in issue ads in 2000. The Media Fund, he said, can raise unlimited amounts to finance radio and television from late March until the conventions."⁹

The advertisement being aired by Media Fund identifies President Bush by name twice at the beginning of the advertisement and again about 20 seconds into the 30 second advertisement. The advertisement's audio states: "George Bush's priorities are eroding the American Dream. It's time to take our country back from corporate greed and make America work for every American." This clearly attacks and opposes President Bush.

Media Fund's Solicitation of Soft Money Funds While Advocating the Defeat of President Bush Violates the Federal Election Campaign Act

In Advisory Opinion 2003-37, the Commission advised ABC that the section 527 committee could not solicit non-federal funds in fundraising communications that conveyed ABC's support or opposition to a specific federal candidate. AO 2003-37, p. 19-20. The Commission determined that 2 U.S.C. § 431(8) means that federal political committees can only raise funds using such solicitations if the funds are subject to the prohibitions and limitations of the Act.

Media Fund's website¹⁰ proclaims its opposition to President Bush's reelection. Its website says, "In less than four years, George W. Bush and those that support his radical agenda have given us a country less secure, a foreign policy in disarray, record job losses, deficits that mortgage our children's future, environmental policies that abandon common sense and attacks on civil liberties that undermine the very premise of our democracy." This is clearly an attack on President Bush and a mischaracterization of the President's policies.

Media Fund's website provides a link labeled "Donate" that links to a page entitled "Victory Campaign 2004.org."¹¹ At the top of its on-line donation page, "Victory Campaign 2004" says, "I want to help change the course of the country away from the

⁷ Jim Jordan, who left his position as John Kerry's campaign manager in November of 2003, serves as spokesperson for Media Fund and America Coming Together (another 527 organization), raising concerns about coordination through former campaign staff under 11 CFR § 109.21(d)(5).

⁸ Anne-Marie O'Connor and Ronald Brownstein, "Hollywood Political Event Stirs Up Storm," Los Angeles Times, December 3, 2003.

⁹ See Anne-Marie O'Connor and Ronald Brownstein.

¹⁰ See <http://www.makeamericaworkforus.org/> (visited March 9, 2004).

¹¹ <https://66.216.126.213/contribute/> (visited March 9, 2004).

Bush administration's radical agenda...."¹² This solicitation and disclaimer indicates that contributions over \$5,000 are accepted and will be placed in a non-federal account. This violates the principle laid out by the Commission in AO 2003-37. The Commission indicated that only donations subject to the prohibitions and limitations of the Act may be raised when indicating opposition to a clearly identified federal candidate. AO 2003-37, p. 19-20.

Given the interpretation of 2 U.S.C. § 431(8) provided to ABC, it is clear that Media Fund is violating the Act by soliciting soft-money through a fundraising solicitation that expressly advocates the defeat of President Bush.

Media Fund's Solicitations to Its Donors Are in Violation of Federal Law

The Commission has determined that federally registered political committees, as Media Fund is required to be, cannot solicit soft money "by using the names of specific Federal candidates in a manner that will convey [its] plan to use those funds to support or oppose specific federal candidates...." AO 2003-37, pp. 19-20. Such solicitations, the Commission determined, violate federal law. 2 U.S.C. § 431(8).

Although Media Fund has struggled to keep its fundraising efforts from public view, published reports described a December event in Hollywood with representatives of liberal special interests where Media Fund sought donors and plotted strategy to raise soft money to defeat President Bush.¹³ Under the auspices of an umbrella group called the "Joint Victory Campaign" comprised of Media Fund and another soft dollar Section 527 organization called America Coming Together, donors were asked to contribute soft money for the purpose of defeating President Bush.

The "Joint Victory Campaign" donated \$3 million in soft money to the Media Fund and reported this donation to the IRS. In fact, this is the only donation Media Fund had received as of December 31, 2003 according to its IRS report. IRS records indicate liberal special interests - both corporate and individuals - donated large sums of soft money to the Joint Victory Campaign which then funneled this soft money to the Media Fund. Donors to the Joint Victory Campaign include Laurie David of Los Angeles (\$95,000)¹⁴, Sustainable World Corporation of Houston (\$3,100,000),¹⁵ Linda Pritzker of Houston (\$900,000),¹⁶ Steve Bing of Los Angeles (\$1,998,397)¹⁷ and Agnes Varis of New York City (\$345,000).¹⁸

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ 10960 Wilshire Boulevard, # 2150, Los Angeles, CA 90024

¹⁵ PO Box 27529, Houston, TX 77227

¹⁶ 3555 Timmons Lane #800, Houston, TX 77027

¹⁷ 1801 Avenue of the Stars #150, Los Angeles, CA 90067


¹⁸ 150 Central Park South, New York, NY 10019

Conclusion

Because the attached advertisement clearly attacks President Bush, an identified candidate for federal office, and is being broadcast in states commonly considered crucial to the outcome of this fall's Presidential election, Media Fund cannot use illegal soft money and is required to register with the Commission.

As a result of the above information, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc. requests that the Federal Election Commission conduct a rapid investigation into these allegations, question the individuals and corporations that have donated excessive sums, and declare that respondents have knowingly and willfully violated the federal campaign finance laws, impose sanctions appropriate to these violations and take such further action as may be appropriate.

Sincerely,


Thomas J. Josefiak
General Counsel

Thomas J. Josefiak, hereby verifies that the statements made in the above complaint are, upon information and belief, true.

Sworn to pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001.


Thomas J. Josefiak

County of Arlington
Commonwealth of Virginia

The foregoing instrument was subscribed and sworn
before me this 9th day of March, 2004 by

Thomas J. Josefiak


Notary Public

My commission expires October 31, 2008



27044180126

**Political Organization
Notice of Section 527 Status**

OMB No. 1545-1693

Part I General Information

1 Name of organization

Media Fund

Employer identification number

45 - 0526617

2 Mailing address (P.O. box or number, street, and room or suite number)

1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW #1100

City or town, state, and ZIP code

Washington, DC 20036

3 Check applicable box: ☒ Initial notice ☐ Amended notice ☐ Final notice

4a Date established

11/05/2003

4b Date of material change

5 E-mail address of organization

no@email

6a Name of custodian of records

Janice Ann Enright

Custodian's address

1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW #1100

Washington, DC 20036

7a Name of contact person

Janice Ann Enright

Contact person's address

1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW #1100

Washington, DC 20036

8 Business address of organization (if different from mailing address shown above). Number, street, and room or suite number

1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW #1100

City or town, state, and ZIP code

Washington, DC 20036

9a Election authority

NONE

9b Election authority identification number

Part II Notification of Claim of Exemption From Filing Certain Forms (see instructions)

10a Is this organization claiming exemption from filing Form 8872, Political Organization Report of Contributions and Expenditures, as a qualified state or local political organization? Yes ☐ No ☒

10b If 'Yes,' list the state where the organization files reports:

11 Is this organization claiming exemption from filing Form 990 (or 990-EZ), Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, as a caucus or associations of state or local officials? Yes ☐ No ☒

Part III Purpose

12 Describe the purpose of the organization

To communicate with the public on issues that relate to the election of candidates for federal, state or local office or the legislative process in a manner that does not expressly advocate the election or defeat of a particular candidate.

27044180127

Part IV List of All Related Entities (see instructions)

13 Check if the organization has no related entities. ☒

14a Name of related entity	14b Relationship	14c Address
----------------------------	------------------	-------------

Part V List of All Officers, Directors, and Highly Compensated Employees (see instructions)

15a Name	15b Title	15c Address
----------	-----------	-------------

Janice Ann Enright	Treasurer	1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW #1100 Washington, DC 20036
--------------------	-----------	---

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that the organization named in Part I is to be treated as a tax-exempt organization described in section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code, and that I have examined this notice, including accompanying schedules and statements, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete. I further declare that I am the official authorized to sign this report, and I am signing by entering my name below.

Janice Ann Enright

11/06/2003

**Sign
Here**

Name of authorized official

Date

27044180128

6 of 8 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2004 The Washington Post

The Washington Post

January 31, 2004 Saturday

Final Edition

SECTION: A Section; A08

LENGTH: 952 words

HEADLINE: Liberal Donors Back Anti-Bush Groups;
FEC Regulatory Plan Targets Efforts to Fill Vacuum Created by Soft-Money Ban

BYLINE: Thomas B. Edsall, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

Major liberal donors are demonstrating their willingness to fund a new shadow Democratic Party, according to reports filed yesterday by a network of nominally independent organizations committed to defeating President Bush in November.

At the same time, momentum to bar their activities gained new strength. On Thursday, the legal staff of the Federal Election Commission proposed regulations that could choke off the groups' plans, with backing from an alliance of Republican Party leaders and campaign watchdog groups.

The reports filed yesterday with the Internal Revenue Service and the FEC showed millions of dollars flowing from unions, wealthy individuals, environmental groups and others on the left into such organizations as America Coming Together (ACT), America Votes and the Partnership for America's Families, which are known as "527" groups for the section of the tax code governing their activities.

These and other 527 groups were formed to fill a vacuum on the Democratic side of the aisle created by the 2002 passage of the McCain-Feingold campaign finance law, which bars the political parties from raising and spending large, unregulated "soft money" contributions from corporations, unions and rich people.

The ban has proved far more damaging to Democrats than to Republicans, who are far better at raising smaller, and still legal, "hard money" donations.

Without party-raised soft money, many Democrats believe that their voter-mobilization efforts would be severely underfunded in 2004 and that Democrats would be unable to counter an expected barrage of GOP television ads.

Thus, unions, environmental groups, wealthy liberals and other major players on the left have made large contributions to 527s to create what has become known as a shadow Democratic Party. But those groups' plans now face a tough fight for approval by the FEC, which is crucial.

Yesterday, ACT reported contributions of \$12.5 million. That total includes \$5 million from financier George Soros, who has pledged at least \$10 million; \$3 million from Progressive Corp. Chairman Peter B. Lewis; and \$745,000 from RealNetworks Inc. chief executive Rob Glaser.

America Votes, in turn, has received \$50,000 from groups including the League of Conservation Voters, the AFL-CIO, the Sierra Club, the Association of Trial Lawyers, NARAL Pro-Choice America and Emily's List.

27044180129

ACT and a group called the Media Fund have announced plans to raise \$95 million each, for a total of \$190 million, to be spent before the November elections. All told, the various Democratic-leaning 527 groups have announced plans to spend more than \$300 million in 2003 and 2004.

ACT, America Votes and the Media Fund, which is expected to report contributions totaling \$3 million, have made it explicit that their goal is to replace Bush with a Democrat.

ACT President Ellen Malcolm noted yesterday that her group has raised more than \$12 million after opening "its doors less than five months ago with an ambitious goal to re-engage and energize people to register to vote around critical issues, to beat George Bush and elect progressive candidates up and down the ticket in 17 targeted states."

Republicans, because of their success at raising hard money, have been far less aggressive in creating these third-party groups. Now, Republicans are looking with growing anxiety toward the Democratic organizations. Contrary to their traditionally anti-regulatory views, top Republicans now back tough regulation of 527s.

On Jan. 13, Charles R. Spies, counsel to the Republican National Committee, wrote to the FEC: "It is now incumbent upon the FEC to not sanction the undermining and evasion of [the McCain-Feingold law] through the activities of newly formed 527 organizations dedicated to electing or defeating specific federal candidates." His letter had the full backing of RNC Chairman Ed Gillespie.

A Republican-created group, Americans for a Better Country, has pointedly forced the issue before the FEC by seeking an advisory opinion on whether it could initiate programs virtually identical to those already announced by the Democratic 527 organizations.

Earlier this week, FEC Commissioner Michael E. Toner, a former counsel of the RNC and general counsel of the Bush-Cheney 2000 campaign, wrote a letter to the newspaper Roll Call signaling that he is prepared to take a tough stand on regulatory issues.

While declaring that he is not prejudging the issue, Toner wrote that if the 527 groups are allowed to raise and spend soft money freely, "almost all campaign finance observers agree that the McCain-Feingold law will be severely undermined, and that at least as much soft money will be spent on electoral activities in 2004 as was spent before the new law was enacted."

On Thursday, Lawrence H. Norton and other members of the FEC's legal staff proposed strict regulation of 527 groups, severely limiting their use of soft money.

Democratic lawyer Robert Bauer provided the following examples of how the proposed rules would work:

Only hard money could be used to pay for a communication telling voters, "Call President Bush, and tell him that we are tired of his special breaks for the rich," because the only reference is to a federal candidate. A mix of two-thirds hard money and one-third soft money would be required to pay for a communication saying, "In November, vote Bush out of office, and be sure to bring in Jones for Senate and Smith for Governor," because one of the three candidates is running for state office.

The FEC will take up the proposal at a Feb. 5 meeting, and the agency has plans to issue later in the spring a broader rule governing the activities of 527 and other independent organizations.

LOAD-DATE: January 31, 2004

27044180130

2 of 2 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2003 The Times Mirror Company; Los Angeles Times
All Rights Reserved
Los Angeles Times

December 3, 2003 Wednesday
Home Edition

SECTION: MAIN NEWS; National Desk; Part A; Pg. 1

LENGTH: 1321 words

HEADLINE: The Nation;
Hollywood Political Event Stirs Up Storm

BYLINE: Anne-Marie O'Connor and Ronald Brownstein, Times Staff Writers

BODY:

It was the kind of evening Hollywood is known for: a gathering of deep-pocketed entertainment industry liberals to discuss a strategy for electing a Democratic president next year.

But as guests arrived at the Beverly Hilton on Tuesday night, the meeting had become a target of conservatives, who attacked it as a symbol of excessive liberal rage toward President Bush.

Campaign finance reform advocates, meanwhile, worried that it exemplified efforts to dodge new campaign finance laws banning unlimited political contributions.

The session -- initiated by Laurie David, wife of HBO star Larry David, and co-hosted by actress Julia Louis-Dreyfus and 20 others -- was an attempt to acquaint the liberals with America Coming Together, an initiative to mobilize Democrats in 17 states that may prove crucial to the outcome of the 2004 presidential race.

The event also was intended to build support for the Media Fund, an effort organized by Harold M. Ickes, a former key aide to President Clinton. This group hopes to raise as much as \$80 million to fund an independent advertising campaign for the eventual Democratic presidential nominee.

The invitation to the gathering, which was closed to the media and lacked the glitz that usually marks such events, said the fund "will provide a strong message on television and radio by trumpeting the shortcomings of the Bush Republican agenda and articulating the positive differences in Democratic policies."

It added: "This is the most important meeting you can attend to prevent the advancement of the current extremist right wing agenda."

Leaders of America Coming Together and the Media Fund say they are simply pursuing the type of political activities that have helped the Republican Party for years. They note that the GOP has benefited from ads and other political efforts financed by numerous pro-GOP business organizations and advocacy groups that oppose abortion and restrictions on gun ownership.

But by Monday, Matt Drudge, the creator of the online Drudge Report, was reporting on the Internet that the event's organizers were billing it as a "Hate Bush Meeting" -- a charge its orchestrators vehemently denied and seemed to stem from wording added to the invitation by someone as it percolated through e-mail.

27044180131

Los Angeles Times December 3, 2003 Wednesday

Conservative commentator Rush Limbaugh called it a meeting of "Left Coast Hollywood Kooks" and on his Web site posted photos of Jane Fonda, Barbra Streisand and liberal filmmaker Michael Moore -- though they were not associated with the event.

But behind these attacks was another issue -- the way substantial sums of money continue to flow into the political process, despite the campaign finance reform law approved last year that was sponsored by Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Russell D. Feingold (D-Wis.).

Critics charge that groups like America Coming Together and the Media Fund are providing an outlet for the unlimited contributions known as soft money that the law banned. The Democratic Party -- more so than the Republicans -- relied on these large donations to finance its grass-roots organization and national advertising campaigns.

With the Democratic National Committee likely to have far less money for such activities in 2004, the two groups that held the meeting in Los Angeles are hoping to fill the gap, partly by tapping the same wealthy donors who provided soft money to the party.

"You've got these backdoor channels for soft money," said Bill Allison, managing editor of the Center for Public Integrity. "A lot of it's being done -- surprise, surprise -- to benefit some candidates and attack others in the same way a lot of the parties used soft money."

Such critics also are concerned that these new groups will receive less oversight from federal officials than the political parties do.

Ultimately, the low-key nature of Tuesday's gathering was a striking contrast to the controversy that surrounded it. Attendees arrived in jeans, denim jackets, black pants, black turtlenecks and, in some cases, sandals. Three people walked into the hotel's Versailles ballroom wearing T-shirts with an image of Bush with a red line through it.

America Coming Together is intended to act as an umbrella organization for mobilization efforts by a broad range of Democratic interest groups. Its members include representatives of the Sierra Club, powerful unions such as the Service Employees International Union, and other left-leaning groups such as Emily's List, which raises money for Democratic female candidates.

Ellen Malcolm, president of America Coming Together, said that group was already operating in Ohio, canvassing voters, and hopes to be active in eight states by year's end. It and the Media Fund have held similar meetings to solicit donors in other cities, including Seattle and New York, without attracting such attention.

"We're operating totally within the law," said Ickes, president of the Media Fund.

The fund-raising drive, Ickes said, is meant to replace the soft money funding that helped the Democratic Party run \$75 million in issue ads in 2000. The Media Fund, he said, can raise unlimited amounts to finance radio and television from late March until the conventions.

"The critical distinction here is we are not a party committee," Ickes said.

Ickes said the "Hate Bush Meeting" label may have been tacked on by one of the many people who received the e-mail invitation before it eventually reached Drudge.

The New York Daily News reported Tuesday that a man in the Midwest who declined to reveal his name added the "hate Bush" phrase in the e-mail's subject line.

Jim Dyke, communications director of the Republican National Committee, said wherever the phrase came from, it was "descriptive of the liberal elites' " view of Bush.

Dyke added: "I doubt that anyone who is going [to the Tuesday meeting] disagrees with the e-mail title."

The e-mail received by The Times billed the event only as a "Big Meeting."

But Ickes said: "Those of us who are involved in these organizations on a day-to-day basis don't hate Bush. We don't like his policies."

What coalition supporters are concerned about, he said, is the war in Iraq, job losses, the federal deficit, the weakening of environmental protections and the prospect of a federal judiciary -- especially the Supreme Court -- with a number of Bush appointees.

27044180132

Los Angeles Times December 3, 2003 Wednesday

"We see him as representing very radical policies and leading the country in the wrong direction," he said.

America Coming Together has already received a \$10-million pledge from billionaire philanthropist George Soros - a contribution that infuriated some Republican leaders.

Marge Tabankin, a Hollywood political consultant and one of the hosts of Tuesday's meeting, said Republicans "are looking at what the Democrats are doing and they're getting really nervous and they're trying to blow it up. What they're realizing is that this time around, there is likely to be a more level playing field, financially."

If the meeting demonstrated the depth of opposition to the Bush administration among many in Hollywood, it also underscored the hostility many conservatives feel toward what they term the "cultural elite."

Calls and faxes attacking the gathering's sponsors -- some of them anti-Semitic -- came in from around the country from people who heard about it on conservative talk radio.

But in Los Angeles, the unexpected buzz caused the event to mushroom from 100 people to 230 -- prompting the organizers to find a bigger room at the Beverly Hilton and to turn away many people who wanted to come, organizers said.

Among those expected to attend were Christine Lahti, Aaron Sorkin, Rob Reiner, Heather Thomas, producer Paula Weinstein, and "MASH" television star Mike Farrell.

Director Robert Greenwald, a co-host, joked that organizers would have to thank their detractors -- "or put them on retainer."

*

O'Connor reported from Los Angeles; Brownstein from Washington. Times staff writer Allison Hoffman contributed to this report.

LOAD-DATE: December 3, 2003

27044180133